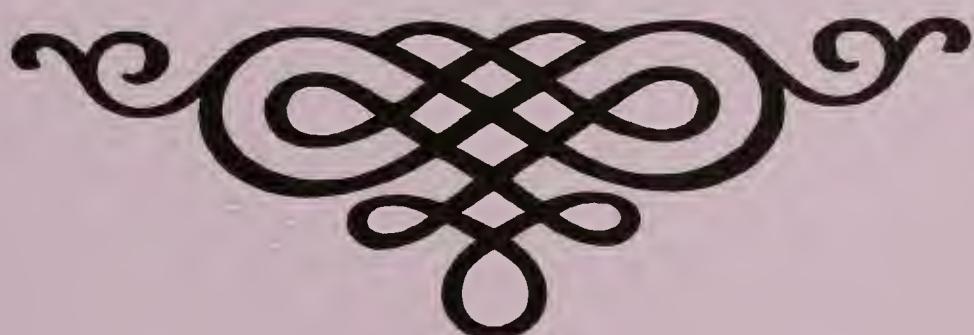




magazine



i magazine

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SPRING 1995

The literary magazine of
Mount Wachusett Community College

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editor-in-chief tonya roberts

i magazine editor teresa m. diederich

mole editor albert arsenault

graphic editor shelly boucher

treasurer pamalar williamson

administrative secretary debra gauthier

assistant secretary anita murray

event coordinator bob geedy

associate editors

linda patient

candace mahoney

carol skelton

mary whitney

michael mimnaugh

bob christian

advisors

doug anderson

arthur marley

contributors

mount wachusett community college students

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sunshine

When your friends cast their ballots,
I lost
but I drove from Salt Lake to Boston and you were still
seeing Mr. Penis Orygamy Duke of Longevity.

You started to read your poetry out loud to me,
again
I think of Gary Numan and cars and stalagtites and
spelunkers and your pine-pitch birthmark.

Your sweaters are always all over the place,
or your books or your thoughts...
you probably caught that severe case of phallic envy from Freud.

On Halloween we were ghosts and wore the sheets out
but your mother said she was moving to Salem because
she's a bitch, I mean a witch, I mean...
anyway, she'd be happier there.

I listened to similar sound stanzas with the usual
barrage of mispeled werds or frases
and watched black strapped platforms crossed
and dangled unsucsexfully blocking boredom. huh?

Your hair falls out and your nails don't grow
I suspect vitamin deficiency but it's really
the ferocious Mongoose, which can be a tenacious
fighter when backed into a corner and may be rabid...
If bitten, Do Not induce vomiting, call a physician immediately,
flush with water, elevate legs and head, apply pressure, ...
Just take your fucking vitamins.

The beauty genius of Simon lyrics eluded you
until the end ... now your suddenly enlightened and Emily
will have to wait until the cows come home or
till your blue in the face
or some other original cackle your mother naturally invented.

I said, pay no attention to the buxom buddy behind the curtain.
they stalked and stared and abused themselves in private, anyway,
much to your delight.

Your father sits in Bible study under the lights of Las Vegas
and we pack up the mule and head for the field of dreams.

Shane Goguen

this path (for Maria del Carmen Jimenez)

I love this path
Through forest hues,
Which many feet have made,

I love the way
The light imbues,
My soul with every shade,

I love the tracks
I leave behind
As if my passage were sublime,

I love this way,
This course benign,
These trees which home me outside time,

I love the tracks
Of hare, of deer and quail,
Tracks of sound, leading to the lake,

I love this path,
This sweet-scented trail,
Which my feet have helped to make.

Tonya Joyce Roberts



they

they will take
Your beauty
Your intelligence
Your reputation

they will take
Your heart
Your soul
Your mind

they will take
Your life
Your goals
Your hope

and they will leave you
nothing.....

By Natalie Lyon

a love letter to my son

Dear Buddy,

First of all, don't let the title of this piece alarm you. I'm not dying or leaving you in any other way.

Someday, you might look at this, and maybe understand some stuff that seems hard to grasp right now. You are entering into a part of your life that you will never forget. Every person I've ever known has looked back on their teen years as a time of the most intense happiness, and the most misery. 'How can this be?', you may well ask. Yes, the joy you feel from discovering so many adult pleasures will be great, but, at the same time, you will also experience pain stronger than any you have ever felt before.

Soon, you will feel sexual desire; this can be a source of delight but, for many people, it is a source of guilt and jealousy. I hope that you will be able to understand that the bad feelings are not your fault; they are the fault of our culture, of the "human condition", if you know what I mean.

In these next few years you will also begin to decide who you really are, or at least who you want to be. This means formulating your own morals. Because only you can decide what is right and what is wrong. A parent can only help you by giving you some ideas about goodness, and honesty, and caring. These things will slowly combine with your personal experience, and bit by bit you will find your own "code to live by". I only hope it turns out to be something that will sustain you throughout your life. You are already forming your tastes: for music, dress, art, and the choosing of friends. Do yourself a favor: always ask yourself, whenever you make a decision, "Is this what I really want to do for me?" This question can prevent a lot of heart-ache for the person who wants to be happy.

Decide to be happy! You will help no one and nothing if you don't.

This pretty much sums up what I wish for you in the next several years. If you do these things, truly for yourself and because you feel that life should have some purpose, then I will know that I have done right by you, and you will know fulfillment.

Claire Wagner

the oranges

we ate
demanded the pleasant task
of peeling.

Slowly, rag by rag of brilliance
in pieces fell away,
parrot feathers to fledgling fruit,
until we tore into white cotton
threads stitched about
the plump and colored half-moons.

And we took our feast.

We became disciples
of uncertain truths
that might exist elsewhere
as they did in peeling.

We rent the temple sanctuary,
we stripped the prophet,
we did violence in hunger's name.
Our nostrils tingled with the balm
of breaking in,
our mouths purchased
the long, moist years
of rich men's planting
and poor man's working.

We swallowed clear flavor on our tongues,
the tongues nectar and acid,
and we accepted
in the eagerness of our appetites
all that was to come.

ticey

Awaiting my call
She looks beautiful
Tears flow
I wonder
Can I take it today.

Her face blacken
Her eyes meet mine
With lips pursed
Her voice strained yet contained.

A witness to violence
A believer in faith
A Freedom Dreamer
If not for this place.

Her tears become a river
That flow through me
Her voice a cry
Of how it used to be
Wish I could smile
Knowing
I'm not part of this.

Linda Patient

Tom Belcastro

a slip of time

A river of leaves flow through the sky;
as gnarly fingered tree branches sway in the wind.
Tall field grasses, sickened by frost and cold winds.
Corn stalks wounded by black birds.

I sit, and watch.

M. Lancey



run for your life

She emerged out of her safe world
she had been warm, and fed, and loved.
Now she was cold.
The envelope that had been her home expelled her,
evicted by nature.
Born into a world with one purpose,
she was born to run.

On wobbly legs, and large round knees
she launched her body up.
Only to fall,, again and again.
The blood of great champions raced through her veins,
she could not quit,
she was born to run.

In the paddock of lush grass
grass as green as emeralds,
grass as blue as the sky.
She stretched her legs,
felt the muscles expand.
She felt the desire, she knew her job.
She was born to run.

Her coat still fuzzy with youth,
her eyes filled with innocence.
A perfect star was placed on her forehead,
as if the white had been penciled in by angels.
Angels that would keep her safe,
and keep her body strong.
She felt a stirring inside her,
it told her to run, as fast as she could.
Speed would keep her alive,
it was as if she already knew,
she was born to run.

Karen McInnis

my wheelbarrow

A wheelbarrow is a tool invented by man.

My wheelbarrow is my chariot. I ride it through the sky at full moon, clutching it's sides, shrieking.

It is raining. My wheelbarrow makes me a pool where I dive for treasures and swim with mermaids.

Walking to work I wish I had my wheelbarrow to talk to, to carry my conversation.

My wheelbarrow is a sculpture.

I put on my pair of wheelbarrows and skate down the road. People ask, "Where can I get a pair of those?"

A hundred wheelbarrows - the car salesman thinks they are cars. He asks "What color do you prefer?"

My wheelbarrow and I make love in the field. The sun warms us. The long grasses part willingly.

No one else can see my wheelbarrow smile.

At night I rush out to see the fireflies play in my wheelbarrow.

I cover him in fur to hibernate for the winter. He needs time to himself, time away from me.

All winter I will dream of my wheelbarrow.

We are going on a trip. I won't have to buy him a plane ticket if he doesn't smile at anyone.

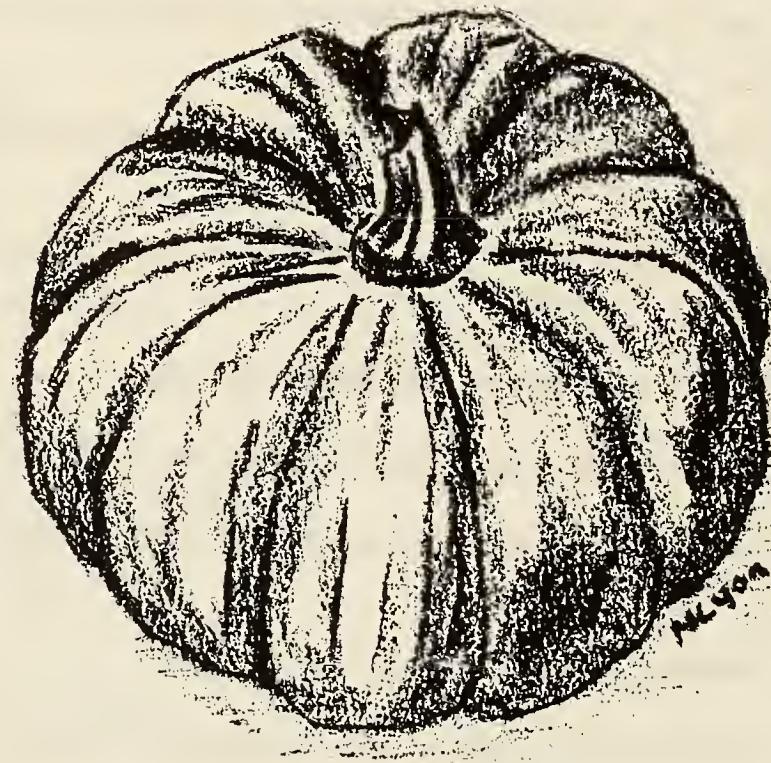
People ask, :Why do you push an empty wheelbarrow?

K.S.

a kiss

I wrote my name across a golden leaf
with fire that burns within my soul,
and sent it off upon the whisper of a breeze
that carried it across a thousand miles of waiting
before landing at your feet,
where you reached down and picked it up,
and ran your fingers, slowly
over the letters of my name
while raising it to meet your gentle lips.

Nancy Leger



untitled

Will she come again tonight? She invades my night-time world with such impunity that she comes and goes as she pleases. Although she had beauty beyond beauty, she seems oblivious to the flaws in my own appearance. She looks into my heart and is happy with what she finds there; she finds all my beauty inside and brings it out. I sleep that I might see her and that she might come to me. I know that she exists in the daylight; I just haven't found her yet.

Robert M. Whitney



yellow, purple, green,
black and blue

It began with a gentle loving touch,
turned into a hard angry fist,
touch turns to slap
slap turns to punch
punch turns to push.

I love you,
as fist connects with flesh,
knocked around,
rocked around,
I love you.

Lights flash
fists beat, bruise, batter,
it's only flesh
flesh will heal.

Yellow, purple, green,
Black and Blue
I love you.

It began with a gentle loving touch,
turned into a hard angry fist.

Lori Fallon

untitled

Stillness shadows the reckoning me
observing quietude of endless nights
strung like a necklace tossed against a milky-way sky
in joyous solitude of calm
same still point guide, orchestrating this beauty
in land of trust
ripens like plump berries
under the exalting moons witness
sweetness unlike another
in a just moment.

Roberta Theriault

night justice

on the third day we found his tracks
 this man ate the flesh of murdered children
 buried their bones in his cellar
the next day we found fresh boot marks
 in mud by the river
 this man bathed in the blood of his victims
 raped them and taped their pleas
by late afternoon we had him running
 through marshland
 this man has before and after pictures
 kept in a scrapbook under his bed
we caught him at twilight
 tied his hands with wet leather
 stripped him naked with our knives
 wrapped his head in straw burlap
 and lit it on fire
this man screamed for mercy
 ran blind in black fields
 his tears sizzling
 a million stars watching
 the torch of night justice

James Pelletier

gift of innocence

Black muddy boots
 tracked me through the freshly fallen snow.
I peered up at him.
 Fool,
 knowing not the worth of an honorable kill,
 he left me.
When I see this man
 with the stone frozen hands,
 I will thank him,
 for the one deserving piece of himself
 he unknowingly planted within me.
When my legs are strong enough to stand,
 I will once more linger in that open field,
 this time with a gun.

Anonymous



untitled

Fall was now truly in full bloom as autumn leaves gingerly swirled about in the gentle breeze, and squirrels, acorns in cheek, ran hither and thither gathering their winters bounty.

Children's fun filled laughter could be heard as they leaped in and out of meticulously raked piles of leaves, while the distant humming of lawn mowers, and chattering of rakes saturated the cool crisp air, in preparation for the imminent return of winter.

Geralynn Roche

death to barbie

I remember
that girl that used to live
down the street
Jessica, I think it was
She was a troubled child
my mother used to say
I knew
my mother was correct
Jessica
sitting in a sandbox
her cat used as a toilet
Torturing and mutilating
her Barbie doll
Ripping out her glossy blonde hair
Snapping off her slender legs
Burying her face in the sand
Letting Ken do unlawful things to Barbie
Cutting and tearing up her clothes
Trying to saw off her plastic breasts
Sending Barbie, zooming
in her pink Corvette
down the hill
in the way of traffic
I always wondered
why
Jessica
hated her so much.

Michael Graves



untitled

i miss you
i love you
you can not call

i write you
i phone you
you can not call

not fault of yours
your life is not bored
days filled with friends
i call you
you can not call

i send you cards
i send you gifts
i call you
you can not call

i call again
and again
and again
you can not call

the phone rings
i leave a message
you can not call

my love for you immense
i grow tense
you hear my pleading
you can not call

you are there
i am here
i love you
i miss you infinitely
you can not call

she is mad
i am your dad
you are seven
and far away
you can not call

you don't understand
you could not know
i miss you so
you can not call
i miss you
i love you
you can not call

Michael Turcotte

love is

the intelligence to recognize the
beauty of a relationship,
the wisdom to communicate with you,
the compassion to understand
your emotions,
and the desire to work with you
to fulfill your dreams!

Love is
the commitment you give to one another,
the deepest of feelings
for each other,
the opportunity of a lifetime,
Love is the highest command!

Love is
the realm of reality in which you've
opened my eyes to the world,
the reason I feel alive in this world,
the inspiration we give to each other,
and the honor with which we
respect one another!

Love is
the spirit in the way you uplift
life to another level,
the foresight into the future,
and the stimulation you add to life,
while being able to
retain our individuality!

Love is
the reassurance and unselfishness
I give to you,
the love songs I sing to you
all night long,
the trust and belief I have in you,
the most treasured feeling in my heart!

Love is
the gift
I give to you!

Al Arsenault



about that day

(a mother's lamentation)

Sometimes, if I close my eyes and reminisce,
I can still feel the warmth of your wet, little lips
on my cheek, that day.

That day, had I known that it would be the last time
I would have the pleasure of feeling
the softness of your plump, little body
in my arms,
I would have held you tighter
that day.

But I didn't know
and I didn't hold on.
I kissed you good-bye
then I let you go.

And so, my son,
you slipped away from me,
that day.

Pam Williamson

untitled

I thought I loved you
Like the ocean
Loves the brightness of the sun
Every morning they wake together
Like you and I once did
I thought I loved you
The others were all jealous
We thrived on that then
We lived for everything
And just the moment was heaven
Did you think I wasn't as happy as I seemed
All was for you
I would do it again you know
I never tired of your precious love
And those burns will never heal
I'll never forgive what I have taken for granted
I always thought I loved you
Now I know

Jason Pollard



the meddler

He'd always come at night so no one would see him. Quiet as a mouse, he would slip right under our noses, and we wouldn't even know he was there until the morning when we found the mess he'd leave. He didn't care if he made a mess, as long as no one caught him doing it, because he knew that he didn't have to pick it up. For the longest time he went undetected, and every morning we'd have to clean up the mess. Until one night when we finally caught him.

It was about 11:00 pm. I had thrown a party and was still cleaning up my house. I grabbed several bags of trash and headed to the dumpster. But, before I turned the corner I could hear noises. I was a little afraid to look at first. But curiosity got the best of me. I just had to know who or what had been messing everything up all this time. So I held my breath and turned the corner.

I had startled him, but he made no move to run away. At first he just looked at me curiously. Then he returned to what he was doing. Not feeling guilty at all that what he was doing was wrong.

Every morning when I had to pick up the mess, he'd leave me, I would curse him, whomever he was. But now I was sorry for feeling that way for so long.

The old man was picking through the dumpster. The trash cans had already been ransacked in the usual way, their unwanted contents scattered across the alley.

A paper bag was carefully set at the man's feet. It was overflowing with soda and beer cans. On the other side of the man was a used paper plate. In it was a half eaten hamburger and some chicken bones with tidbits of meat still attached to them.

Immediately I felt guilty for ever getting mad at him in the first place. So I walked over to him and offered him some money, but he refused it. I felt helpless, so I dropped the money into his bag of cans and then left.

After that night, I never found another mess in the alley, but even if I had, I wouldn't have minded picking it up.

Nancy Courtemanche

admire her

You, stereographic, real to unreal,
Draping a leg over
Like a hypnosis watch,
Shake it up, Lazy Susan!
Your neck, moon smooth,
Flirting as it hides
In dark ringlets, rice-scented hair.
I see your silk Zen face,
Keeping your thoughts
As tantalizing and esoteric
as Buddha's inner smile,
And I feel like Yeats,
Totally Gonine for Maud.

Me, in a little boy crush story,
Hamming it up in green superstar glasses
As you model by,
Ignoring me with a laugh.
Feeling helium-headed
At your giraffe voice
Demurely saying "Bon jour!",
I giddy-up along,
Always leaving chances around corners.
Dropping potassium permanganate
At your feet
I try to find Hemingway
In a lab manual.

I want your cotton crown,
To feel that heaven
Is forgiving and getting.
I'd swallow my dumb tongue
Just to have coffee with you.
I'd have done Valentine's
Cause nothing says loving
Like supermarket roses and spoons,
Nothing gets it as sincere as Hallmark.
I'd just as soon leave this
On your car instead,
Attached to a bouquet
Of shrinking violets and wall flowers,
To save my security and crush.

Jeremy Eagle



dryer lint

It happened again
though surely not the first,
not even the same woman
yet still the same feeling.
A certain tune,
maybe a voice,
could be the way,
a tempo takes you,
RIGHT THERE!

Oh God
I ask you, WHY
I want it over
like gone.
Just not return,
returning never,
like sort of ever,
again.

I feel two ways,
I'm in a plane,
my chute of confidence upon
my back.
though with much doubt,
take one last look,
and off I go!
GOOD-BYE, you know?

Free!
so easy to leave,
look for another,
another what?
Could I shut the door,
shelf the chute,
argue the dispute
with who a mirror,
don't be silly.

Even if I could
ARATIONALIZE
all self correcting
in need of no one.
Have I not known her,
in at least three faces?
and how could I
not again.

How does one cut out a
replay,
who will edit the
script.
could I free my burden
with the snip of a
scissor,
for in the angst knife
breeds a shiver.

Could I walk away,
so easy to care,
not to turn around
and look.
That a part of one's circles,
lay still,
among many,
on a floor of this self,
called I.

Like a lonely Wolf,
in a cold desert,
sings it's sad song
to the moon.
Through the silent cold
vastness
of nothing,
called limbo.

There life, lay
forever,
in a room.

Mike Mimnaugh

untitled

It was the deepest, brightest red that red can be. As red as the very blood that keeps you and me alive. The petals were as soft as velvet, and the scent, the scent was as fresh as the crisp air after a warm April shower. It was filled with beauty, it was filled with life. It was a rose. But this rose you gave me was special; it was more than a flower, it was a symbol. It symbolized the love that you felt for me and I for you. Just like that rose, our love was full of life and beauty. One day, I needed to feel loved, so I went back to our rose, only to find that the red velvet petals had turned brown and dry and the fresh scent was gone. When I reached out to grasp the flower, every petal fell to my feet. Suddenly, you were gone and the love that we had was in pieces on the ground.

Amy Wilder

the eternal dance

Triumphantly I throw my arms toward the Heavens
And dance on my front lawn;
In full view of cars, trucks, and old ones
Who walk in early morning.
With my hair blowing across my face
...In the wind...
My nakedness has no shame..
Having learned to smile
i have loosed a million demons
that had melted into my soul.
Now... with the floodgates open,
Their flesh feeds my feet and I spin
in
endless
circles...
Never growing dizzy,
Swimming in the ecstasy of purity...
I have won,
And no longer shall the floodgates be rusted shut.
Run to the hills and tell the wise men
their savior has risen,
Come and see the naked man..
Free as the wind that sooths him.

Shawn Bernard

just once

I want to see a woman
brag about her genitals
openly criticize
the bulge in his pants

I want to see a woman
intimidate him
cowering against the wall
searching for escape

I want to see a woman
with brute strength
push him
quivering to the ground

just once

Heidi J.

my knight

I lay on the big bed along side what used to be a giant of a man, now only a shadow. The room is very clean and large. The street light sends shadows dancing across the wall, even these shadows seem to be alive.

This man, father of 10 children, could conquer the world. Always working two jobs, never complaining, he did it for us. He was our protector. Like a Giant Knight with his great sword, no harm dared to fall on his own, for he would have died to protect his family.

Life was so precious to him. God put this man on earth to paint smiles on the faces of little people. His peers knew if something needed to be done, ask Willie. No questions asked, he'd do it. Advice, if needed, it was endless. He knew not how to say no. I often wondered how one body could hold so much love and caring for the world and it's contents. I envied him so much.

His talents were also endless. He could repair appliances, lay carpeting, give hair-cuts and even sew. He was a gentle giant, for even with huge hands, giving a baby its bath was not done clumsily. He lived by one very important motto. There isn't anything in this world you can't do, or at least give it your best shot. Living life for him was not a matter of a glass being half empty or half full, it was full at all times.



(continued)

And now, at the young age of 56, his body, with the great disease slowly engulfing his insides, tires from the fight. He knows, this battle, he shall not win. He worries, not for himself or death, his job on earth, not yet done. Five small children still remain.

He lays quite still, eyes glassy. I gaze at his chest, his strong heart beat, visible with each thump. He knows time is short, each breath, inhaled and exhaled with labor, and yet with thanks. For he knows not how many more will be drawn. He knows I have questions, many that have gone unanswered. Unspeakable for years, now, my time for answers has come. With just the small light on his night-stand glowing, Daddy needs to talk.

His head turns and our eyes meet. He quietly says, "Ask me anything, this time I'll answer."

"The war," I said. "Why did you never want to speak of it?" Slowly, his gaze returns to the ceiling. He squints, as if brought back to that moment in time. And then the story is told:

"The stench of death, so great it hangs in the air. The taste in your mouth, so vile it makes you want to vomit. Fear in the eyes of the dead, stood out like the great walls that kept them in. Walking through these rooms, if you listened closely, the screams still echoed. It made me wrench with pain. Knowing there were civilized people who would torment men, women, children and even babies, just to see how much pain they could tolerate before death relieved them. Human Guinea pigs. That's what they were. I was part of the clean-up crew for the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps."

I stopped him there. The pain in his eyes, so great it exceeds the pain that ravages his body. Now I know why it was unspeakable. Tears trickled down the side of his face. I put my arm around my hero's chest and hold him. We both cry.

The questions for today must end, for he tires. So much more I need to know, but time is my enemy. My Great Knight weakens with each passing day.

I hold him till he sleeps, once again gazing at his chest, making sure his heart still beats. Quietly, I lift myself from the bed, lean over and kiss his forehead and say, I love you Daddy,

My Hero, MY KNIGHT.

Doreen Herr



old poetry (for alex)

Paper stained with singed and mangled flesh
Reflect the puzzling angles of past woes
And recreate the tortured life I dread
Must I watch the fall any joy undergoes?
As I read, each piece of flesh revives
I can't escape the crippling dance of agony
No pages could hold these fragments of my soul
That I've created and stare back at me
Some say a purging won't delay
Others say metamorphosis is eventual
But like shadows deepen, overtake the day
These statuettes are powerfully dark, sensual
Seducing me into an ecliptic despondence
Offering a cheap embrace, breaching my distance

Teresa M. Diederich

unlove

Do you understand me
Where I came from
Can You see me
My heart is bleeding
Forever in pain
Love is disdained
And you
Are the only thing
I can relate to
by death.

Do you hate me
Am I a human being
Can You feel me
My soul is dying
leaving my body
suicide is so easy
You control this pain
As I walk down
damnation street
forever and ever more
unloved.

Arnold Paulsen



reflection

alone at the outdoor cafe
drinking coffee, smoking, bearing
resemblance to Betty Davis with
wondering eyes, viewing side street cars
parked next to alley ways listening to the
street violinist playing show tunes curious
where he learned to play
i see her from above amused
by cheap entertainment
waiting for promises to be kept
by innocent strangers passing
if only i could reach her
love her and explain
each time she sips the bitter Italian remedy
another person dances sourly
with daisies on their grave
knowing too late the freedom of
their souls in a society with an
identity crisis
her eyes, brown as they are
capturing the essence
seeping into her veins
freeing the heart from demons
using them as bait,
luring them in, seducing them until they
are as vulnerable as Vito,
the taxi driver
speaking Italian, stood
up on his first trip down Broadway
she walks to the counter and orders another
coffee, walking out her reflection is old
the map of promises written on her
face, sitting herself down at the table
i take a last look at beauty
before her soul escapes freedom
and see my reflection.

S.A. Henry



tears from the mountain

Day by day,
Years upon years,
Continues the flow,
Of the mountain's tears.

For you and me,
These tears are wept,
Due to the way,
Our land's been kept.

From town to town,
And from city to city,
Stream the tears,
Of sorrow and pity.

From the hills high,
To the deserts grand,
What has happened
To our once-good land?

A long time ago,
Our self destruction began.
Solely created,
By the power of Man.

Air so clean,
Water so pure,
Now lay dying,
For there is no cure.

We now catch up,
With our distant past,
For pretty soon,
The lands won't last.

Thus here we lie,
In our eternal grave,
The land of the free
And the home of the brave.

We don't care.
We don't even try.
And for this reason,
The mountain will cry.

These tears are wept,
By our fathers fore,
These tears are wept,
By the mountain Rushmore.

Mike Bello



the wrong kind of bird

not much of an egg farmer,
my grandfather bought the wrong kind of chicken.
one look at those hens laying fewer eggs
and living just as long,
infuriated him so much
he refused even to eat them.
he kept them in the coop by the old gray fence
built to keep the wild land
from trailing it's dirty feet across his property -
they strutted, clucked,
loving life as only a freeloader can.
but grandfather's philosophy was simple:
 no eggs, no food.
so those chickens,
bony bodied and pitiful,
ended up in a heap on the other side of that fence,
joining the weeds in their futile
attempts to get in.
30 years later, my uncle has adopted this philosophy.
1:30 am, drunk,
tells this story as if he's proud to have the lives
of a dozen helpless chickens on his soul;
proud to be displaying his cruelty,
ignorance,
fear,
as he watches me with tight, dogged eyes
to tell me what i've already guessed;
he isn't talking chickens anymore.
fingers, white around the neck of his brown bottle,
eyes, piercing like heated needles,
warning that my closet door is open.
 no eggs, no food, he belches,
but i can laugh at his narrow eyes,
narrow intentions;
i can find my own food.
i've spent my life tearing down the fence
they've been building for generations.
i'll remember the birds by destroying the fence
and dance where it's picket shadows have been.

Carrie Richter



untitled

as i turned around i could see a hand
a hand falling into the water
drowning
it frantically twisted and turned
trying to keep alive

it went under several times
more clutching the air tightly
drowning
maybe i should have reached out
to it , but it was too far

Heather Desmarais

water death

Betty died last night
We're all in mourning
Up at four
Rocking on the basement stairs
Sorting, planning, dividing
Problems and troubles
Things to do
Shadow mind
Cuts my breathing
Thin strips of dream blood
The guilt I've siphoned off
Over the years
Into make-shift containers
In the back rooms of my mind
She was graceful and strong
Something in the water they said
I go about the day
Looking for paper
Collecting the children
Appeasing
There's no room
To paint my grief
No time to spill it
The funeral is after school
But Betty's dead, and I can't lie down.

B.P. Madden-Jee



untitled

No birds come
to the birdfeeder
outside my window,
and the windchimes
have been silent
for days.

My heart has
run away from home.
It sends me
the occasional postcard,
but says nothing
about when it might return.

It's probably out
at some cheap disco
right now; dancing, laughing,
drinking wine,
perhaps hoping
it might get laid,

While I sit here
like a mother,
waiting up for my
rebellious teenager to
come home and bring
my inspiration back to me.

Angela Madeiras

courage

What is courage?
It is the chance
To walk away
From what cannot be
Courage is going forth
To new challenges
To face what can be.

Deb Gauthier

Confound me with images,
so surreal.
I revel over her goddess-like flesh
though your strong feminine ambiance,
shining as when pain is lost and pleasure is won.

I can only watch from afar
I dare not approach for I fear to stutter.
A brilliance such as hers could only break my downtrodden heart.

Her rejection of me would pain me.
As a rose wilts; somber.
Her perfection of spirit deign's me.
Left lifeless; bravery's eyes close.

This is a letter out to the heart of a pristine goddess.
Although mortal by birth, to me her star shines high above the skyline.
Sharing magnificence among the constellations.
If my pathetic disposition could ever submit I would risk a suffering pride.
To take her in my arms.
Run naked amongst the creatures of the night.
Under a moonlight great and shadow's mischief.
I would make love to her like I feel.
Passionate and strong.
Until the first signs of dawn.
Caressing her body as if made of a fine silk.
To feel driven once again.
Like a predator in the wild.

My hands would run through her hair in gentle strokes.
We share frequent gazes into each other's eyes.
Watching the sun rise above the sky like a king.

I'm in love.
Now I must walk away.

Kenneth Bernier



intense existence

Intense existence
Here-there-everywhere
No temperance.

Tight gripped
Explosive thoughts
Pulled and ripped.

Exposure screams!
Too much, too much
Can not be seen.

In hidden valleys
Protective boundaries
Drifting beyond view.

Here in illusion
The Great River
Floods destruction.

Time is drowning
Fight it, fight it!
Life is pulling.

Intense existence
Here-there-everywhere
No temperance.

Dawn Chapel

the twenty-eight elite

Lions, and Bengals, and Bears, Oh my
Cardinals, Falcons, and Eagles all fly.
Cowboys, Redskins, and Chiefs out west
Broncos, and Colts a rodeo test.
Buccaneers, Vikings, and Raiders in sin
Saints, and Patriots all marching in.
Rams, and Buffalo crashing and stampeding
Chargers, and Jets sir-speeds misleading.
49er's, sSteelers, and Oilers panning and digging
Dolphins and Seahawks flipping and swimming.
Packers, and Giants, and Browns, Oh my.

R. J. Simkewicz Jr.

the professor and maryann

My man said
That I should try
To be
Like that other woman
And I said
That Until he can
Fix a radio
With a coconut
And
Run a generator
With a man
On an exercise bike
Made out of
Palms and bamboo
Like Maryann's man can,
I'm not changing.

Gillian Hodgen

the storm within

Don't be so quick to judge me
For you know not what's in my heart
For you only see what I want you to see
And I choose to stay apart

The wall that comes between us
Was put there for a reason
It keeps the wind and rain and snow
Inside here every season

It's not that I don't like you
You seem OK to me
But I know from past experiences
That hurt is destiny

So be my friend and stay away
I need some room to breath
You'll think I'm here and turn around
And see I had to leave

So don't be too quick to judge
What you can't see within
Cause if I let you in here
I'll only hurt again

Shelly Boucher



say goodbye

Grampa? Are you here? I need to talk to you. Oh! how I wish I could see you or hear you. How I lie in my bed at night wondering where you are, can you see me? Can you hear me? Oh! how I wish you could, for if you could, it would help me so much.

You left me when I was so young. I know it wasn't by choice but yet you still left. I don't hate you for it, I understand, but it still makes me feel a little sad. I was just beginning to understand what kind of man, husband, father grandfather and great grandfather you were.

I tell my children about you as often as I can. I know they don't know you, but still they sit and listen and smile at the stories I tell. They may not know you but they love you even if only by my stories.

Oh! how I wish I could see you just one last time. I sometimes wonder what you might look like with a white gown and a pair of feathery wings. Do you have a halo and a harp? Or do you just wear what you want? I know if you could wear what ever you want, you would wear your hunting cap or your fishing cap, for every time I saw you, you always wore one or the other.

I have some good news, although you probably already know. I graduated, I told you some day I would go back and get my G.E.D. Well, I did it and now I'm in college. How I wish I could hear you, so I could hear you say how proud you are of me.

Great Gramma is doing fine. Oh! how she misses you. How we all miss you! Grampa? Are you here? I hope so, there's something I have to say. I wasn't there when you passed away. I want to tell you how much you mean to me, how much I love you, how much I miss you. But I really need to say the hardest thing to say.

I really needed to just say Goodbye.

Laurie Hotchkiss

for erin, my love

I stood over the bed, too large for the tiny body it kept.

She cried for Mommy to hold her,
but the tubes and wires and needles kept us apart.
I gazed into the soft brown eyes
that pleaded to go home and play and jump.

I held the tiny hand that clenched my two fingers fiercely,
another nonverbal plea for freedom.
Please don't let the strangers touch me, Mommy.
She cried when the nurses came and gave her the shot,
God, how I wanted to bundle her up and take her to the park to be alone.

There was no peace in this place.
She liked the park.
Her eyes shot pain I felt throughout my body
and her screams made me deaf.

her tightening hands loosened with the pain and her eyes
whispered the first words she'd ever learned,
I love you, Mommy, please take me home
You'll be all right, honey, Mama's here
Home, she whispered

And the monitors stopped.

They just stopped.

I ripped through the wires and tubes
and bundled her up. I felt her hand.
It wouldn't clench.
It wouldn't clench.

And I begged God to make it clench, but he or she just
couldn't give me anymore...

We sat there for hours, no sound,
no breath, no life.
I kissed her parched tiny lips,
and died with her.

Shealagh O'Shea

November 1994

grandma glick

adventures of gathering mint
grown wild, down by the creek
sipping the fresh cold tea

calling her sheep from the meadow
feeding them crackers
found in her apron pocket

sitting on the front porch
listening to her imaginative stories
of horses and cows in the pasture
laughing till we had sore bellies and tears

her blue grass soprano voice
harmonizing with Mennonites
singing a cappella hymns on the radio

running to the window together
the sound of horses hooves clomping
pulling Amish buggies
though she had seen them many times

watching her comb her long dark hair
winding it up in a bun
pinning her white prayer cap in place

letters in the mail with newspaper clippings, poems, photos
stamps for a collection

memories tucked in fragrant envelopes
with a ribbon, easy to untie

Anita Murray



bottom of the ninth

Bottom of the ninth, bases loaded, two outs, down by 3. Number 7 for the Braves is getting ready to bat. Two strikes, three balls.

"Oh God, please let me hit it. I don't care how far, or where it goes, but please, please let me hit it", nine-year old little league player Joey says to himself. His stomach cramping, mouth dry, knees keeping time to some internal rhythm, much like that of the old "Wipe Out" tune.

He spits on this left hand. Then on his right. He rubs the two together, grips his bat, and takes a couple of practice swings. He balances the bat between his legs, removes his cap and places it so that the brim faces the back. He'd seen the "cool" kids do that, and he needed to be cool just now.

With one final look heavenward, he stepped up to the batters' box. He tapped the plate, and assumed the position, elbows up, knees bent.

The crowd quieted.

The pitch was thrown.

He took his swing. The crack of the bat hitting the ball was deafening.

Joey saw the crowd, almost in slow motion, arise in unison. They went wild, chanting Joey, Joey, Joey.

The runners came home, one by one, taking their time. Enjoying their victory run. They knew that Joey had slammed that ball so hard down left field that the Eagles outfielders' wouldn't find it until well after the cows came home, and the fat lady sang her song.

When Joey was rounding third base, he had a little tear in his eye. He didn't know why exactly, but he knew he was the coolest kid ever.

C. L. Mahoney

